

March 10, 2020

My name is Rhonda Schmidtke and my home is located 3,890' from TPC's Port Neches Plant. I have lived at this same location and raised my children here for the past 30 years. Never in my wildest dreams would I have ever thought I would be awoken in the wee hours of the morning on the day of November 27th, a day I will never forget. Before I proceed, I am PRO oil and gas. My entire family makes a living from the surrounding Petrochemical Facilities in this area like most everyone else in the community. There is absolutely no reason that TPC, as well as, other petrochemical facilities cannot be good neighbors and that includes improving the air we breathe and fixing what they have destroyed. So, this is where my terrifying story begins but sadly does not end. Home by myself, husband at work at another Petrochemical Facility and a twenty- four year old, hearing impaired, son asleep. I am woken by a loud jolt, my alarms begins to sound and my first thought was that an intruder was entering in my home. My 3,000'+sq, one-story home is U-shaped with the entire inside having Storefront Commercial Glass. I jump out of bed, unknowingly slicing my foot on a vase that had fallen off of a table and shattered, while running to my keypad. My phone begins to ring and I know it's most probably the alarm company. I couldn't focus on the keypad from sheer terror. At this point, I don't even realize perimeter glass has broke. I answer the phone and the operator informs me that it is the Master Bedroom zone again sending waves of terror through me because I am in that room. She asks if I am ok to which my reply is no, please call the police. She comes back on the line and informs me that the police can not respond. Can you only imagine how you would feel if told police would not being coming? So, I know my husband can't get to me quick and I then call a family member and their alarm is sounding also thinking there is a break-in. Little did we know, all we had to do was walk outside and see the sky lit up. I soon discover that a plant had blown up. Oh My God, it has happened. Something I never was in fear of. Refineries are just a part of life here in Southeast Texas. I checked on my son and then my animals. My small dogs have a room of their own and unfortunately on that night all four walls were glass. Coming down the hall, I hear my dog barking and it sounded like it was coming from the outside. How could that be? To my horror it was, my precious dogs were now on the patio standing in glass. Without hesitating, still barefoot, I rushed out to bring them into safety again cutting my feet running through the broke glass that was everywhere. My family member arrives and I remember opening my kitchen door to the garage, reaching out to hit a button to open the garage and my ceiling falls on top of my car. At this point, I am in such shock that I just turned around and closed the door. As I began to go through my home and see the devastation, I cannot in words described to you how it feels to see your home in such a state. Then my thought, I have an 86 year old mother that lives by herself a few streets over and find out that she is experiencing the same thing. I collect my senses, and begin to sweep up glass not even realizing the severity of what really was happening. At the time, I had two large dogs that were in their own house that I knew would need to come out soon so at that point I thought the priority was to clean up glass. My next round of horror begins when I hear the police department driving down my street on intercom yelling "get out now, get out now". My thoughts at this point FEAR, absolute fear. I had five dogs on that early morning, two of which were 80lbs and three small dogs. Since that time, one has passed away of you guess it CANCER! I hurry up, trying to comprehend what was happening, husband is worried but can't leave to help. My nephew shows up to help me load up dogs, food for dogs, medicine for dogs and really that's about it all we had time to gather. So, myself and my son head to my family business where we think we are safe. I am driving down the road with sheetrock hanging from my car and by the time I unload all of my animals it has started to rain and here I am soaked with no clothes to

make a change. After all of this, I am feeling thankful that we are all safe and alive. It could have been so much worse and my fear now is, will this happen again. Will these refineries be forced to comply with laws and regulations already in place or just pay fines that are more cost effective than fixing the problem

The sun has now risen. It's a new day and we will be ok. By the evening, I have decided that surely the fires are under control and my best option is to head home. Before I could even make it to my drive, the second explosion happened. I turned my car around and headed back to my safety place, my business. That safe net did not last long. A mandatory evacuation is called. I will just fast forward a bit. I spent the entire night before Thanksgiving hunkered down in my son's, in-laws garage with five dogs instead of preparing for Thanksgiving Dinner like most in this country. Typically, I do not buy my clothes from the Dollar General but that night I did because remember, I left with nothing. No clothes, no toothbrush, only slippers absolutely nothing else. But you have to find a little humor. Can you imagine spending the night with in-laws that you barely know, in this condition. It was not pretty to be informed that their out-of-town family would be there for Thanksgiving Dinner, you know, the ones you met at the wedding. At that point, I loaded up my dogs and left. Luckily, I contacted my Vet and they were able to board my large dogs. You see I have an RV but left so fast, that I had no time to take it then could not get it out due to the mandatory evacuation.

Now it's Saturday and we are all finally home sweet home. New feeling on the horizon. I still can't shake the feeling that someone was breaking into my home and my alarm will no longer work because the door contacts are blown off. After three service calls from the alarm company, we are finally able to set our alarm bypassing these broke door entries. Next phase, our community meets TPC. What an introduction. Personally, I have had three adjusters out that TPC has sent and one from my own insurance. I have taken off of work for each and all of the inspections have lasted at least four hours. It is quite an imposition. Animals have to be re-arranged. Husband works nights so he is trying to sleep. Nothing has been normal since that morning of November 27, 2019. Since most of the glass has been boarded up, we only have one plywood entry way. The first week or so I stayed cut up with glass. We are now in month 4 and I have become mastered in entering/exiting plywood and broken glass. So, like most in the area, TPC finally sends over an estimate, not acknowledging all of the damage and under estimating what they did. Story after story, you contact them and they send yet another adjuster, same scenario.

We have now gone through a winter, running our furnace but because of so many broke windows we have had to also run ceramic heaters to due to the continual draft. We are exposed to the elements. We have protected ourselves as best we can but plywood and plastic do not properly protect. My home has damage throughout. I have put emphasis on the glass because that has caused my family the most harm. As I have mentioned previously, my son who is now 24 is hearing impaired. What I have not mentioned is that he is a super allergic person. This is why my animals are not inside my living portion of my home. Growing up he had asthma, was prescribed breathing treatments, rescue inhalers and preventatives. You name it, he was on it. At the age of 16, he was able to stop all of this and unless he experienced some sort of respiratory sickness, he did not have asthma. Since this explosion, he has had two rounds of steroids and daily breathing treatments, antibiotics and now has been prescribed a daily preventive. Waiting for TPC to fix what they have broke has me livid. Why should my son have to be

put back on medicines because of the air they are polluting and not paying for what they blew up so that I could repair my home. Now month four, the estimate to just replace the broke glass is \$32,000.00. I have had to go ahead and purchase this paying out of my pocket. How could this be? This is TPC, they have insurance and it will be ok. They appear to be blowing us off like they blew us up.

I do have my own homeowner's insurance. I have had as much problem with them as TPC. The underwriter is UPC and I have had to file two complaints trying to get them to release an estimate. The first complaint worked but again they are doing the same as the TPC group, not acknowledging damage or under estimating. I am now waiting to see if the second complaint with the Texas Department of Insurance will force them to release my adjusted estimate. I feel violated in so many ways. At this point, I feel like both insurance companies have teamed up and both have taken on the tactic of wearing down policy holders and homeowners. We are being forced to "lawyer up" and we all know this could take years. I have the resources to replace my windows, but what about the people that aren't so fortunate. They love their families too. What about the devaluation of our homes? Hey lawmaker, what about us? We oil your world. Don't blow us off too.

Today, my husband is scheduled for yet another of his many MRI's, Cat Scans and X-rays. He is now 10 years cancer free. He has an appointment March 23 @ M D Anderson and praying that all is still well. I can't even begin to tell you how many people just on my street has had cancer and many that have not lived to tell about it. Why? To add insult to injury, they poison us with the chemicals they pump out, then they blow our homes up and now will not pay to fix. It's is totally unconscionable to me. FYI, I have included a few pictures of my glassed area before and after and also the next day at my office you will see what we were breathing and did so for many a day.

We need the help of lawmakers. If the people we have elected to protect us don't, then who will?

My life as I knew it will never be the same. I still feel the impact of that night and I am so very aware that as bad as it has been, the results could have been worse. Sorry for my long story, but it's my story! To be continued...

Thanks for listening,

Rhonda Schmidtke